WDC Executive Committee

NOTES 1/14/08

1) H-520 Green Workforce;

Alan Rodgers attended to present the findings of the Green/Sustainable Workforce Focus Group. A copy of the report from this event was provided for the members. In broad terms, there is a need for workforce training not just at the obvious green firms like Grow Solar and NRG, but also in the construction and more traditional energy sectors. "Lack of skilled employees" and "Employee training" were ranked first and fifth respectively among the top five challenges facing the industry over the next five years. The most severe shortages were listed as; field technicians/installers, mid-level managers / supervisors, entry level employees, electrical engineers / technicians, and sales / customer service reps. Discussion centered around the possibility of prioritizing funding under Act 46 for the green sector. It was agreed that this is a good idea. One challenge will be to define what kinds of firms would be included as part of this sector.

It was noted that 80% of the skills identified in the focus group for the green sector are common to many occupations and many jobs within the sector. This may make the provision of training and reaching a critical mass of students easier to accomplish

It was also agreed that we have the opportunity to address the priority of the Administration and Legislature on the green sector and that this is a way to demonstrate the ability of the Council and DOL to respond to those priorities.

2) Review of Council meeting and next steps:

The results of the sector discussion at the Winter Council meeting were reviewed. A copy of those results is attached. It was agreed that the members of the executive committee identified on the report of that part of the meeting would make follow-up contacts to explore the possibilities of developing the necessary critical mass in those sectors. The steps are to determine if the sector has

workforce needs, what these might be, and if there is a likelihood that industry leaders, or a trade association, would be willing and able to actively partner on a training effort. That should help us prioritize the sectors with which we could work.

3) Discussion of pending legislation:

- S-249 Collection of SS#s for tracking outcomes was reviewed and it was agreed that the WDC should support this legislation. The results would be valuable in helping us understand what is working and what we need to improve. It could also be a step towards more precisely quantifying the ROI of training investments.
- S-331 Green workforce legislation was reviewed and it was determined that while the Council agrees that the green economy represents a great opportunity for Vermont, and that we fully support the idea of prioritizing the green sector for training funds, we would advise the legislature against naming specific sectors as priorities in the Legislation or setting aside a portion of the Act 46 funds for any particular sector. Act 46 funds should have enough flexibility to be able to respond to opportunities as they arise and there is also a concern that naming one sector will set off competition from other sectors to be so identified, further limiting the utility of the funds. In addition, the draft of this legislation includes a definition of green enterprises that includes such things as retail and finance, which is so broad that is may be difficult to address.

4) Report on Act 46 implementation:

• WDC criteria, etc. - It was agreed that the WDC criteria for the WETF funds were fine for the first round as a start, especially given the time frame, however, need we to analyze the results of this round of funding as to sectors, geography, target populations, and the budgets of individual projects to determine how to maximize the benefits of these funds. It was pointed out that funding went to the applications that came in, and with the exception of AGC, and VBSR, which Chip cultivated, and possibly a few others. We were not proactive in targeting funds, but rather, choose from among the applications that we

received one at a time, without making an effort to balance or prioritize these investments.

• Priority sectors - This realization brings up the concept of prioritizing sectors for Act 46 funding, such as the green sector mentioned above. It was agreed that it is time to move beyond simply analyzing the needs of a sector and hoping for the best, but to actually link funding decisions to the priorities we identify. This does not mean that no funds will be used for other sectors, or a creative new approach that comes in, but that we will shift some funding into a category that will allow us to develop comprehensive training strategies in partnership with priority sectors without having to worry that they will not be selected for funding by a committee under an open competitive process. The Council has previously developed a set of criteria for selecting sectors that may be useful or that could be modified to help us be systematic in selecting sectors. A copy is attached.

Vermont Workforce Development Council

January 9, 2008

Discussion of Sector Approach to Workforce Training

Defining the Topic:

- Vertical vs. Horizontal Sectors? Healthcare did both/complimentary
- Green Technology Sector Are these really distinct jobs and skills?
- Manufacturing has distinct needs though many are common across firms.
- Common needs across all sectors Innovation and problem solving

Challenges:

- Expect and anticipate job turnover
- Aging out of the workforce

Potential Sectors

• Food Processing and Production

(Jim Pratt will talk to industry leaders)

• Local Sustainable Agriculture

• Educator shortage

(Chip will call Linda Shiller,

- Math, Science and Physics Education &

& Mike Deweese

- Administrators

http://www.ccsuvt.org/taap/

- Guidance Professionals

• Small Bio-Tech

(Peter Kreisel)

• Captive Insurance

- Workforce Shortage limiting growth

(John O. will call Molly L.)

Construction

(Pat MP will call Don Wells)

- Carpenters

- Heavy equipment

- Programs in place - Gaps remain

- Masons

- Aging out of skilled workers

• Homeland Security

(Chip will call Steve Marsh)

• CPA's

(Mike Quinn will contact)

Considerations for Next Steps:

- Leadership must be invested as part of their mission
- New money brings partners, but personal organizational investment in achieving outcomes is essential
- Data must be collected and used ongoing
- Knowledge of what is being done now
- A hub or center to support leadership